

HELP YOURSELF.

This, says the Yankee Blade, is the true secret of success, the master-key that unlocks all difficulties, in the various paths of life. *Aide-toi, et le ciel t'aidera*, as the French have it—help yourself, and Heaven will help you. The greatest affliction that can befall a young man is, to be the recipient of charity—to lean, for any length of time, upon others for support. He who begins with crutches, will end with crutches. It is not in the sheltered garden, but on the rugged Alpine cliffs, where the storm beats most violently, that the hardiest plants are reared. It is not by the use of corks, bladders, and life-preservers, that you can best learn to swim, but by plunging courageously into the wave, and buffeting it, like Caesar and Cassius, “with lusty sinews.” The monied charity of individuals to individuals is one of the greatest curses that afflict society. It is the Upas tree, that paralyzes and reduces to the last gasp the moral energy of every man who inhales its poisonous atmosphere. Under the appearance of aiding, it weakens its victims, and keeps them in perpetual slavery and degradation.

Cold, consequential, and patronizing, it freezes the recipient into humiliation, and there leaves him, as firmly wedged as Sir John Franklin amid the thick-ribbed ice of the Arctic Ocean.

Money bestowed this way is nine times out of ten more truly wasted than if thrown into the sea. It is labor bestowed upon a worthless soil, incapable of yielding anything but a crop of weeds, or feeble plants which never reach maturity. God never intended that strong, independent human beings should be reared by clinging to others, like the ivy to the oak, for support. The difficulties, hardships, and trials of life—the obstacles that one encounters in the road to fortune—are positive blessings. They knit his muscles more firmly, and teach him self-reliance; just as by wrestling with an athlete, who is superior to us, we increase our own strength, and learn the secret of his skill. Read the history of the rich and poor in all ages and countries, and if you do not find that the “lucky dogs,” as they are called, begun life at the foot of the ladder, without a finger’s “lift” from anybody, while the “unfortunates,” who flit along the paths of life more like scarecrows than human beings, attribute the first declension in their fortunes to having been bolstered and propped up by others—we will resign all pretensions to philosophy. All experience shows that this boasted benevolence tends to extinguish the faint sparks of energy in those who partake of it, till, having fallen into the despair and indolence inseparable from a cultivated sense of inferiority, they look upon themselves as beyond the pale of hope, and at last lose even the wish for independence.

THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

We do not know the origin of the following article. It is excellent:—

A certain individual, whom we shall call Bullard, was one of the most cross-grained and peevish of men. It was misery to be near him. He grumbled and snarled incessantly, and found fault with every one and every thing around him. Nothing seemed to please him. He seemed to exist in one perpetual foment of irascible impatience, uncomfortable himself, and sowing the seeds of anger, fretfulness and discord wherever he appeared. His home was especially unhappy. Bitter retorts and passionate invectives obtained dominant sway. He constantly railed at his wife, and she replied in the same unloving strain; the children quickly imbibed a like vindictive habit, until such a thing as a pleasant look or kindly word was never known among them.

One day Mr. Bullard was returning to his cheerless dwelling, more feverish in temper than was his wont, in consequence of some disappoint-

ment, ready to vent his angry spleen upon his family as soon as he arrived. If the supper was not ready to sit down to at the very moment, he would almost turn the house upside down, and strike his wife to the quick with his taunting complaints. But chancing to approach a little sunny-haired girl, whose mild blue eyes and loving face were such a picture of bursting kindness as he had never seen before, an incident occurred which effected a complete revolution in his peevish frame of mind and planted a new feeling in his turbulent breast. The girl, and one, evidently her older brother, were playing with a small carriage; and, suddenly turning near a stone step, she accidentally struck the carriage against one corner, and broke it into atoms. In a passionate burst of anger, the boy advanced, and struck his sister a severe blow in the face with his clenched hand, and stamped his feet in a tempest of fury upon the ground.

But, instead of returning the blow and revengeful speech, after an involuntary cry of pain, the noble girl laid her hand gently on her brother's arm, and looking sorrowfully into his flushed face, softly said, "Oh, brother Tom! I did not think you would do that." In a moment, as if stung by a hot iron, the boy shrunk back, and hung his head in shame and conscience-stricken pain. Then he said, "Forgive me, dear Helen, I will never do it again." And scarce had the penitent words left his lips, when his sister's arms were thrown around his neck, and forgiveness sobbed on his breast. Here was a lesson for Bullard! At first he was quite stunned by it; he could not understand it. It was something utterly beyond his philosophy. But he felt that it had somehow done him good. Bit by bit, as he proceeded on, his own angry feelings vanished, till he felt more calm and kindly than he had done for years. Yea, he was softened to his heart's core, and he felt something very like moisture springing to his eyes.

Little noting the wonderful change which had taken place in her husband's temper, Mrs. Bullard was dreading his arrival home, for supper was not near ready, and she had had the misfortune to burn the cakes she had baked for that meal. And the children, copying from her, were unusually cross and bad. In vain she had scolded and whipped them; they only snarled and struck each other, and almost drove her distracted with their quarrelling confusion.

Mr. Bullard entered, and whatever could be the matter, Mrs. Bullard could scarcely give credit to her senses. Instead of dashing the door behind him in a pettish crash, and stamping his way forward to the kitchen, he took the crying baby from its bed, and hushed it with the softest and most endearing words he had ever used. And his face had a smile on it—a real, kind, sunshiny smile. What strange wonder was this? Mrs. Bullard was, at first, struck quite dumb with astonishment, and the children stared at their changed father as if at a loss to make the mystery out. He spoke, and actually said, "My dear Mary, is supper nearly ready? I'm as hungry as a hunter!"—Their wonder increased more and more. The children hardly seemed assured whether it was their father or not; and Mrs.

Bullard scarcely knew whether to believe in the evidence of her eyes and ears. But the change was real. Already a blessed feeling diffused through the family circle, like unto the falling of the morning dew, or the fragrant breath of summer flowers. At first, hesitatingly, Mrs. Bullard replied—"Supper will be ready directly. But I am so sorry these cakes are burned. Must Willie run to the bakery for a loaf?" "No, never mind," returned Mr. Bullard, "we can scrape off the burned part, and then they will taste as well as need be."

And taste as well they did, and better than cakes had tasted in the Bullard dwelling for a long time before. Not one jarring speech marred the pleasantness of that happy meal. Mr. Bullard's kindly speech and smiling face had descended to his wife, and from both became reflected in their children. The house looked brighter. The beautiful mantle of cheerfulness had fallen on it, and there was unutterable music in the very ticking of the old clock. Mrs. Bullard cried with delight, when she saw the baby crowing in its smiling father's lap; and he promised, if the elder ones would be good, to take them on a nice walk with him on the next Sabbath day. And she resolved never more to speak a peevish or angry word again, if constant watchfulness could prevent their utterance, but retain the peaceful happiness which only kind words and smiles can bring. A happy influence, too, was exerted on the children. They no longer saw peevishness and anger in their parents; and gradually, but surely, lost it in themselves. And Mr. Bullard, whenever he felt his old bad feelings rising up, to find an outer vent, called to mind the conduct of the blue-eyed girl, and resolutely crushed them down.

Reader, believe us, kind words are the brightest flowers of earth's existence; they make a very paradise of the humblest home the world can show. Use them, and especially round the fire-side circle. They are jewels beyond price, and more precious to heal the wounded heart, and make the weighed-down spirit glad, than all other blessings the earth can give.

A SCENE FROM REAL LIFE.

BY MRS. ALICE ATKINSON.

"My wife feels as though she were laboring very hard for the benefit of others."

This was spoken by a man who considered himself a good husband; but if he had been one in reality, would his wife have been troubled with such feelings?

Let us consider the subject, and take an occurrence from every-day life, to illustrate it.

Mr. B— arises in the morning with the intention of going to the city, a distance of twenty miles, and back the same day. In his haste to be gone, he does not observe that his wife is paler than usual. Her health has been poor for a long time, and her altered appearance now, is not even noticed. Although they are in comfortable circumstances, yet neither feel able to keep hired help. As the husband loves neatness and order, for which the wife is remarkable, the latter determines that her washing shall be done in his absence. But many things arise to hinder—the wood is poor and will not burn—the babe requires more care than usual. The sun has passed the meridian and is hastening on his daily course; but her work is not half done. She toils on with an energy beyond her strength, hoping all will yet be well. She pictures to herself the children quietly sleeping in their snug little bed, the floor mopped, the fire bright and cheerful, the table spread with its snowy cloth, and her husband's favorite dish prepared, ere his return.

But, alas! bright anticipations vanish; the day is past, and "evening shades appear;" the babe becomes more troublesome and now takes all the mother's time. She has nearly succeeded in quieting it, when she hears the well-known step on the threshold; her husband enters; he sees the unfinished washing with all its accompaniments of tubs and pails; the fire is nearly gone out, and his little boy, two years old, is splashing water from one thing to another, in great glee. Mr. B— seizes the child, and places him in a chair in the corner, with so much violence that

the room quickly resounds with his screams. He then whips him to still his cries, that his own voice may be heard. Every blow pierces the mother's heart, but she knows remonstrance is vain, and lets things take their course, in silence.

Her turn comes next, and he can hardly find words strong enough to express his indignation; among many other things, he tells her she never has anything in order; he never knew her to have a fire, or a meal of victuals in season.

By this time, the babe was fairly aroused, and it needed considerable exertion to hush its plaintive cries, but by carrying it about in her arms, the mother was at last triumphant.

She next prepared their evening meal with as much alacrity as exhausted nature would allow; and, as her husband sipped his tea, and enjoyed the genial warmth of the fire, the irritability of his temper passed off, and with it all thoughts of the late unhappy occurrence. He soon retired to rest, and, in refreshing sleep, forgot the toils of the day. His wife had now her washing to finish, and every thing to put in its place, even to her husband's bootjack; for, with all his love of order, he frequently forget to put up his own things. When she had accomplished all, she too retired to rest, but not to sleep—no; every nerve was unstrung; and, as she laid her throbbing head on its pillow, and vainly attempted to sleep, the events of the day would crowd themselves into her mind. Yet she would not allow herself to think unkindly of her husband. She tried to reason thus—"Have I not a good husband? Does he not provide for my actual wants, according to the best of his ability?"

But, notwithstanding all her endeavors, the cruel words which had been uttered by him in wrath, would rush into her mind, like unbidden guests, until tears began to flow in profusion, and memory became busy. Then she thought of the happy home of her girlhood, of the mother that watched over her, of the days when the rose of health bloomed on her cheek, and her brow was unclouded by care. But, most of all, her memory reverted to the bridal day, when her lover promised, in presence of God and man, to love, cherish and protect, until death should them part. She asked herself if she had ever been unfaithful to the marriage vow; conscience answered no; had she not studied her husband's happiness with untiring zeal, until self was all forgotten, health gone, constitution enfeebled? And, now, as she felt herself less able to perform the duties required of her, she felt that her love had been illy repaid. Thus, after a day of overtasked labor, and nearly a night spent in tears, the wife sunk into an uneasy slumber, to be disturbed at intervals by her babe, until the dawn of another day, when the well-rested husband called upon his wife to arise, not doubting but she was as much refreshed as himself.

Now, what had that husband gained by all this? Had not his wife done her best, and what could she do more? It is true, he knew not of her grief and tears; he knew not that such treatment was hastening her to the grave; as she daily sunk under the accumulated weight of care, he knew not that the cause was in any way attributable to himself.

Yet, it would have required but little forbearance on his part to have spoken a kind word, or sympathized with her a little. She would then have performed the same duties with cheerfulness, and considered herself happy in the possession of such a husband. And when her head rested on its pillow, and she strove to hush its throbbings, no images but such as affection brings would have haunted her imagination; and her slumbers would soon have been as calm as those of the loved ones beside her.

If any man, who has a care-worn wife, chance to read this article, let him look well to the subject; and, if he wishes to be met with a smile or look of happiness, let him strive by his own example, to sow the good seeds of affection, and he will be sure to reap an abundant harvest, for "virtue is its own reward."